

REMARKS

The above preliminary amendment is made to remove multiple dependencies from claims 5, 12, 15, 17, 19-21, 24, 32, 36-37, 40-44, 47-49, 50-51, and 53-55. Also, claims 3, 4, 7-11, 14, 22-23, 25-27, 31, 46, 54, and 56 have been cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer. Such amendment was made to conform to U.S. rules and practice, and was not made to limit the scope of the claims.

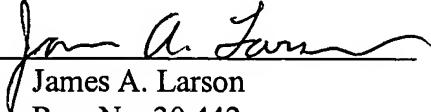
Applicants respectfully request that the preliminary amendment described herein be entered into the record prior to calculation of the filing fee and prior to examination and consideration of the above-identified application.

If a telephone conference would be helpful in resolving any issues concerning this communication, please contact Applicants' primary attorney-of record, Brian H. Batzli (Reg. No. 32,960), at (612) 336.4755.

Respectfully submitted,

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Dated: 29 January 2004

By   
James A. Larson  
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BHB:JAL:hjm